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The
Society of
Friends
of
Medical
Progress

*WHY IT WAS
FOUNDED*

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The Society of **Friends of Medical Progress**

A National Lay Society

Organized and incorporated in the year 1923

[1] *To encourage and aid all research and humane experimentation for the advancement of medical science;* [2] *To inform the public of the truth concerning the value of scientific medicine to humanity and to animals;* [3] *To resist the efforts of the ignorant or fanatical persons or societies constantly urging legislation dangerous to the health and well-being of the American people*



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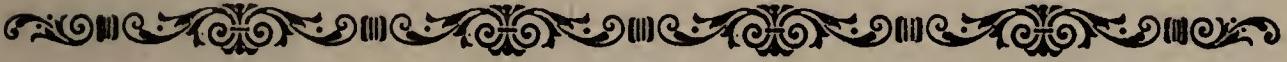
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Meriden, New Hampshire



THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS OF MEDICAL PROGRESS

WHY IT WAS FOUNDED



*If you owe gratitude to any doctor here is a chance
to pay your debt*

THE Society of Friends of Medical Progress (whose officers are all laymen) has been founded because there is an organized, wide spread and dangerous movement on foot to discredit the medical profession, to procure legislation which will prevent the progress of medicine and surgery, to break down the bulwarks of preventive medicine, and thus expose our people to the attack of diseases which are now held in check by science, but which formerly took frightful toll of human life. This anti-medical campaign is being conducted by a considerable number of organizations professing various aims, such as antivivisection, antivaccination and medical liberty, but all seeking by fair means or foul to bring into disrepute scientific methods of combating disease, and to substitute therefor every known form of pseudo-science and quackery.

To give an idea of the attitude of these societies toward scientific medicine we will quote from an appeal which is being made month after month on the cover of a widely circulated magazine which is the official organ of an anti-

vivisection society in New York. It is signed by the President of the society.

"I invite all Anti-Vaccinationists, Anti-Vivisectionists, Eclectics, Homeopaths, Chiropaths, Osteopaths, Naturopaths of all branches, Christian Scientists, New Thoughtists, Theosophists, Medical Freedomists, and all brave and honest physicians of the Allopathic School (who secretly denounce the machinations and conduct of the political doctors), to send in their names and enroll as active participants in an Association of Free People against Medical Tyranny."

Needless to say the "brave and honest physicians" referred to in this appeal, some of whom have accepted the invitation, are invariably unknown men, with no reputations to lose.

The same society of which that magazine is the official organ conducted a most disgraceful campaign against The Red Cross both during and after the war and was referred to editorially by the New York Times, as "that pestilent organization."

The publication through which this society expresses its views, styles itself an "Anti-Vivisection and Animal Magazine" but its real purpose must be plain to any thinking person.

This is only one; there are many similar societies, all working by somewhat different means toward the same ignoble ends. They are composed largely of well-meaning, kindly-disposed people who have been misled by a comparatively few leaders, some of them merely ignorant or fanatical, but others much worse than that, as presently will be shown. They are well supplied with money, much of it received from trusting people long since dead. With this money they raise more money and persuade more and more credulous people that scientific doctors

are brutes or knaves, that scientific medicine is a sham, that scientific preventive methods are unnecessary and that properly conducted experiments for the advancement of science must be abolished.

All honest people who know the facts are withdrawing their support from these societies. The magazine "Life" which stood behind them for so many years, has found them out and will have nothing further to do with them. And Ernest Thompson Seton, the last scientific man in their ranks, resigned two years ago and told them why he did so. No honest person can retain membership in one of these societies after learning the facts, and one of the purposes of the "Friends of Medical Progress" is to give the facts.

All these societies base their claims to support on propositions which are wholly or largely false. The antivivisectionists for instance tell us that they exist for the purpose of saving animals from unspeakable and ruthless torture at the hands of heartless doctors who conduct experiments which never have been, and which never can be, of any benefit. As a matter of fact the antivivisectionists might disband tomorrow and not a single animal on this earth would miss them, for complete investigation shows that no animals are ruthlessly tortured in the laboratories. Whatever reason there may have been for the existence of such societies before the discovery of anaesthetics, today their status is that of a public nuisance and a serious menace to society.

Three times within the last three years — twice in California and once in Colorado — determined efforts have been made by these people to secure legislation pro-

viding for the total abolition of animal experimentation in the states mentioned. After long and bitter fights, with the expenditure of much time and effort the dangerous bills were defeated. Had they been passed, the seriousness of the situation can hardly be exaggerated. If in any state such a bill should become a law, every research laboratory would be closed, bringing to an end all the investigations looking to the cure of cancer, infantile paralysis, influenza, scarlet fever, whooping cough, and many other diseases. No smallpox vaccine could be made in that state, and unless fresh vaccine could be brought in from outside first the children, and eventually the whole population would be exposed to one of the most terrifying and deadly scourges known to man. If there were an outbreak of diphtheria in that state thousands of children would die as they used to die before the days of antitoxin, unless relief came from some other state where no such law was in force. The outlook for farm animals would be just as bad. If there were an epidemic of hog cholera, it would be impossible to check it unless hog cholera serum, the only known preventive, could be procured outside the limits of the state. In short, not only would medical progress be completely halted, but the hands of the physicians and veterinarians and boards of health would be tied, and in default of outside assistance many diseases would run their fatal courses unchecked, as they did in the middle ages.

Nor would the trouble end here. The success of anti-vivisection societies in one state would be used as a lever by similar societies in other states, and the medical profession might soon be crippled over a wide area, greatly

lessening the chances of obtaining outside help. English physicians are already seriously hampered in their work and the recent outbreaks of smallpox in England have given stern warning of the folly of listening to fanatics. It was more than a coincidence that the most serious outbreak occurred in Gloucester, the home of the President of The British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, where presumably his influence was the greatest.

It may seem that such conditions as prevail in England do not concern us, but the following statement quoted from a letter recently received from Dr. A. K. Fisher, In Charge of Economic Investigations, U. S. Department of Agriculture, gives us a hint which we should not neglect. Dr. Fisher is an able scientist and very conservative. He says:—

“During a western trip which I have just completed, in conversation with an eminent physician he informed me that in his opinion within the next ten or fifteen years there would be a fearful epidemic of smallpox spread over the country vastly more serious in mortality than the epidemic of influenza of 1918. The reason for this is that many municipal officers are listening to the maudlin sentiment of those opposed to animal experimentation and the use of antitoxins. Through their activities we may expect the death of many thousand innocent children.”

The antivivisectionists have already seriously checked the progress of veterinary medicine in this country. In 1914 when Mr. Rockefeller gave \$1,000,000 to establish in New Jersey a laboratory for the study of animal diseases, the antivivisectionists persuaded the Governor to veto the bill authorizing this humane work.

Similar activities are always in progress. Last fall dangerous antivivisection measures were launched in several states, notably California, Colorado and New York, and also in Canada. Similar dangerous measures

have been urged in Massachusetts many times, and it has been only by constant vigilance, hard fighting and the expenditure of much effort, usually by local committees, that these attempts to interfere with medical progress have been frustrated. Sometimes the members of these committees, in order to fight antivivisection measures which dangerously threatened public health, have been obliged to give up their own business entirely, for months at a time. It is splendid unselfish work but they cannot afford to do it indefinitely. The problem is a national one, and the Friends of Medical Progress, a national lay society, gives the necessary opportunity for wide cooperation in an earnest effort to solve it.

The activities of the antivivisectionists are legion, and while they are seldom of a nature to impress people who think, their literature is clever enough to deceive completely kindly-disposed but uninformed readers. A favorite method is to advertise widely an antivivisection novel written by one of their own number. Not long ago there appeared such a book calculated to advance the cause of antivivisection by creating in weak minds contempt for doctors and surgeons. The nom de plume of the author is Victoria Cross. In the Boston Herald there appeared a review of this book, and the following paragraphs are taken from it;—

“You get lured into this story under false pretenses.”

“Primarily the novel is a venomous tirade against the medical profession, and especially against medicine and surgery.”

“As a disputant in the discussion of vivisection or of medical science in general, ‘Victoria Cross’ qualifies for a padded cell.”

Yet the antivivisection magazines lauded this “work” and urged their subscribers to be sure to read it.

One of the commonest practices is to misquote eminent men, especially medical men, in such a way as to create the impression that the men quoted are opposed to vivisection. Not long ago The Vivisection Investigation League, so called, sent to a thousand newspapers the statement that the famous surgeon Dr. William J. Mayo demanded the protection of dogs from the vivisection table. In answer to a letter asking if he had been correctly quoted Dr. Mayo sent a positive and vigorous denial, which was emphasized by the following words: "The trouble with the antivivisectionists is that they are not only dishonest but wilfully dishonest.... The truth is not in these people."

The eminent men misrepresented are not always doctors. The New England Antivivisection Society in its monthly paper called "Living Tissue," published an editorial entitled "How The Editors Stand" in which were named eight prominent American magazines whose editors had "expressed positive interest in the opposition to vivisection, or in favor of the exemption of the dog from experimentation." All these editors were written to, and not one could be found who had expressed any such interest. Most of them denied the assertion most emphatically. For example, Ellery Sedgwick, Editor of the Atlantic Monthly said, "So far as I can learn, the Editor of 'Living Tissue' gained her knowledge of the Atlantic's position entirely from her own moral consciousness."

So anxious are the antivivisectionist leaders to impress the public with the rightness of their cause, and so little real foundation is there for their statements, that they

are driven to desperate methods. One of these consists of obtaining, publishing and distributing sworn statements from poor and ignorant people — scrub women, attendants and others — usually discharged employees, who are induced to testify that they have witnessed atrocities in research laboratories. A glaring case of this kind occurred not long ago. The New York Antivivisection Society issued a pamphlet entitled "Affidavits Concerning the Atrocities and Abuses of Vivisection Laboratories." This pamphlet is entirely characteristic of antivivisection literature. Most of the affidavits pertained to alleged happenings in the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. They were, on their face, the work of extremely ignorant people who had been prompted by someone having rather more education but no more knowledge of the subject under discussion. All were signed as witnesses by the President of The New York Antivivisection Society, or the President of The Vivisection Investigation League, or both. The following statement obtained from Dr. Simon Flexner, Director of The Rockefeller Institute, will help us to understand the situation.

"The character of the witnesses employed by The New York Antivivisection Society to make the charges of cruelty may be gathered from the following facts: the Kennedy woman, the chief witness relied on, was employed as a scrub-woman. The men, Dutton and Smith, the other witnesses, were employees discharged for sufficient cause. Since the Kennedy woman stated under oath that the employment in the operating room was very distasteful to her because of the cruel way in which the animals were treated, it is of some importance to learn that she secured, surreptitiously brought to the institute in a bag, and offered for sale for thirty-five cents for experimental purposes, the pet cat of her neighbor, and when rebuked by Miss Lilly, the trained nurse, on

the ground that the act constituted a theft, she attempted to exculpate herself by saying that as the cat strayed into her rooms she had a right to it.

"The true value of the so-called damaging testimony against the Rockefeller Institute is, however, further exhibited by a statement in my possession, made under oath by an ex-employee, to the effect that Mrs. Kennedy, accompanied by two other women, visited her, endeavored to make her say that she had witnessed cruel treatment of animals at the institute, and offered her \$100 for information, and that one of the women showed her the money in a bag."

It can readily be seen that societies prepared to go to such lengths as that, and with vast sums of money with which to employ lecturers and to distribute printed misinformation, can do a great deal of harm among unthinking people who have no means of learning the truth. The great army of the misinformed is thus growing larger and larger and the menace to the health of the people is growing greater every day. The Society of Friends of Medical Progress is organized to counteract the effect of false propaganda of this sort by spreading the truth concerning scientific medicine and the methods by which it is gradually conquering disease and lengthening human life.

We stand for scientific preventive medicine, including standardized and properly tested vaccines, serums and antitoxins, because it is a fact known to all well-informed people that they hold in check or cure diseases like smallpox, typhoid fever, the epidemic form of cerebro-spinal meningitis, and diphtheria, and thus save many thousands of lives every year. And we believe in useful drugs like ergot and pituitrin (to mention only two of them) now universally used to prevent dangerous hemorrhage at child-birth.

We stand for vivisection, properly conducted and prac-

tically painless as it is today in American laboratories, because it has given us these and many other blessings, and because it is the only means by which we can hope for further conquest of disease.

We feel that everyone should be interested in our work and help to support it, because practically everyone at some time in his or her life is in urgent need of medical or surgical assistance. It is unfair to entrust physicians with responsibilities involving life and death, and then allow irresponsible people to deprive them of the means to cope successfully with their problems.

Membership in The Society of Friends of Medical Progress will help to guard our physicians against dangerous interference by ignorant or fanatical enemies, enable them to hold the ground they have won against disease, and further their progress in the science to which they are devoting their lives.

A membership blank accompanies this pamphlet; kindly fill it out and mail it to the Treasurer, Miss Mary Lee Thurman, at the headquarters of the Society, 28 Newbury Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

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